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UNCLAS ADANA 0388

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 8, 2002

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for November 8, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. 38 ILLEGAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERS ARRESTED IN OCTOBER (Bolge) According to the Mersin Security Directorate, 38 suspected members of the illegal organization (i.e., the PKK) were arrested during 13 operations in October in Mersin. The arrestees were arraigned in a local court which ordered 19 to remain in custody. The remaining 19 were released but ordered to appear for their upcoming trial.

3. JANDARMA ARREST 49 IRAQIS FLEEING POSSIBLE U.S. WAR (Turkiye) Baykan (Siirt) Jandarma arrested 49 Iraqis who had illegally crossed into Turkey in order to flee a possible U.S. war in Iraq. The arrestees were taken to the Baykan Prosecutor's Office following interrogation. They will reportedly be deported following the completion of necessary procedures.

4. SIIRT MAN SOUGHT BY INTERPOL ELECTED PARLIAMENTARIAN (Sabah) The November 3 elections were the most interesting of all the parliamentary elections since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. For the first time, a political party whose chairman was barred from entering the Parliament won elections. And for the first time, a person, Fadil Akgunduz, sought by Interpol with a red bulletin for fraud has been elected a parliamentarian. What makes the November 3 elections interesting is that the birthplace of these two victories is the same province: Siirt. Siirt was the province where AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan had recited a poem by Ziya Gokalp which resulted in his conviction and a ban from active politics. It was Siirt people who elected Akgunduz despite many cases of fraud opened against him. Akgunduz received 11,450 votes, becoming the third in Siirt after the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) and AKP. If someone has made a mistake, the judiciary must punish him," public employee Yusuf Alcan reacted. Alcan claimed Akgunduz had been prevented from establishing an automobile factory (Jet Motor, which had earned him the name "Jet Fadil") in Siirt. He had made investments (in Siirt) amounting to USD 100 million and he had TL 30 trillion (18.2 million) in the bank. There are people who do not want any investments made in this region, Alcan argued. Support for "Jet Fadil" resulted from his being seen as a victim, from hope for employment, as well as ethnic origin solidarity, and his participation in rallies via telephone which caused Siirt people to burst into tears. Siirt Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Nedim Kuzu said poverty and hopelessness opened the way for "Jet Fadil" and gave statistics: Income per capita has fallen below USD 900 in Siirt, there is only the Kurtalan (Siirt) Cement Factory, which currently employs 250 people only. Other plants are either inoperative or closed.

HOLTZ